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DELTA COUNCIL
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September 13, 2011

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Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Serious Concerns about the draft Delta Plan

Dear Chairman Isenberg and Members of the Council:

I am writing to express my concerns with the draft Delta Plan being developed by the Delta Stewardship Council. Though the fifth draft plan shows some improvement over previous drafts, I am concerned it will not meet the co-equal goals of improved water supply reliability and Delta ecosystem health in its current form.

I am very concerned that the draft plan is vague about what kind of water supply we can expect in the future. Our area cannot adequately plan and pursue opportunities without some certainty as to our future water supplies. California simply cannot afford to advance any plan that creates local uncertainty and economic instability at this time.

The plan should address the co-equal goals of water supply and Delta ecosystem health, by addressing the distribution of specific amounts of water to each goal. If the volume of water needed to satisfy the urban and Ag needs were diverted around the Delta, then the remaining water could be directed through the Delta to meet the Eco-system health of all parts of the Delta.

There is enough water to satisfy both of these needs each year, but if there was a low water year, the addition of a surface storage reservoir above the Delta could be used to satisfy the demands of both the co-equal goals. Nothing about a reservoir plan says that the stored water must be used for urban or Ag water supply only. It could be available to the Delta ecosystem too, as it should be. This would provide for a consistent water supply quantity to the users south of the Delta that would allow for appropriate planning and conservation activities going forward and insure that no further demands were placed on the Delta supplies for urban or Ag uses.

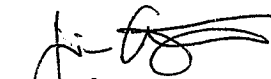
I am also very concerned about the inclusion of economic development goals in this plan. The Delta Commission should not be trying to solve the area's economic issues at the expense of the water users or the ecosystem. The local area should be responsible for the economic development of the area, like most regions and cities or communities, not the rest of the state or the water users specifically. This is not one of the co-equal goals of water supply and Delta ecosystem health. The addition of developed economic activity in the region of the Delta could only mean more demands would be placed on the Delta, rather than fewer. And it is likely those demands would come in the form of tourism and water recreation, which would potentially do more harm to the Delta system than it would be good for the Delta. The Delta is already a fragile ecosystem, and needs no further stressors placed on its waterways and lands.

It is also extremely troubling that the plan attempts to dictate local water management decisions on everything from rate structures to recycling targets. That level of micromanagement from Sacramento undercuts local planning hundreds of miles from the Delta. The council should focus its energy instead on improving our water supplies and the ecosystem health of the Delta.

I respectfully urge the council to fully consider these concerns and discuss the Alternate Delta Plan developed by statewide water, business and agricultural interests through the Ag-Urban Coalition. I urge council members to work with the coalition to indentify the best options for meeting the co-equal goals. We simply must get this plan right for the sake of our water supply, our economy and our environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Atkinson", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Jim Atkinson
Director, Mesa Water
2871 Alanzo Lane
Costa Mesa, CA 92626